

Appln. No.: 10/081,968
Amendment Dated February 16, 2006
Reply to Office Action of November 16, 2005

NSG-207US

Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 5 and 10 have been amended. No new material is introduced herein. Claims 3 and 9 are canceled. Claims 1, 2, 4-8 and 10-39 are pending. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 11-39 are withdrawn from consideration.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Okuno (U.S. Pat. No. 6,669,356). It is respectfully submitted that this ground for rejection is now overcome for the reasons set forth below.

In particular, Okuno does not disclose or suggest:

...a reflecting plate arranged on the rear-surface of said light-guide plate and on at least one of the peripheral side-surfaces of said light-guide plate exclusive of the at least one of the peripheral side-surfaces corresponding to the at least one light source ...
(Emphasis Added)

as required by amended claim 1. Support for the amendment can be found, for example, on p. 26, line 25-p. 27, line 5; and Fig. 17.

Okuno discloses, in Fig. 7a, an illumination device having tubular light sources 8 provided on side surfaces of a light guide plate 11 (Col 1, line 18 and lines 26-32). Reflecting plate 10 is shown to be disposed between light sources 8 and case 9 and is described as being shaped as a "flat tube" (Col. 1, lines 22-23). Okuno does not disclose or suggest that the reflecting plate is arranged on a peripheral side surface of the light-guide plate exclusive of a peripheral side surface corresponding to the light source, as required by Applicants claim 5. The tubular light source 8 of Okuno emits light on all sides. Okuno, thus, requires a reflective surface to surround the light source to increase the amount of light that is directed to the light entrance surfaces of light-guide plate 11. Applicants' claim 5, however, arranges the reflective plate on a peripheral side surface of the light-guide plate exclusive of the at least one of the peripheral side-surfaces corresponding to the at least one light source. Thus, Okuno does not disclose all of the features of amended claim 5. The subject invention represents an advantage over the illumination device described in Okuno because the light source arranged on a side-surface of the light-guide plate does not need a reflecting plate behind the light source. Okuno does not provide this advantage.

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Because Okuno does not disclose all of the features of claim 5, claim 5 is not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Okuno.

Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Okuno. Claims 7 and 8, however, include all of the features of claim 5 from which they depend and are patentable over Okuno for at least the same reasons as claim 5. As discussed above, Okuno does not disclose or suggest that the reflecting plate is arranged on a peripheral side-surface of the light-guide plate exclusive of the at least one of the peripheral side-surfaces corresponding to the at least one light source, as required by claim 5. Accordingly, claims 7 and 8, which include all of the features of claim 5 from which they depend, are also not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Okuno.

Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Okuno in view of Tabata et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,375,335). Claim 10, however, includes all of the features of claim 5 from which it depends and is patentable over Okuno and Tabata et al. for at least the same reasons as claim 5.

Okuno is described above. Tabata et al. do not supply the deficiencies of Okuno because it does not disclose or suggest that a reflecting plate is arranged on a peripheral side surface of the light-guide plate exclusive of the at least one of the peripheral side-surfaces corresponding to the at least one light source, as required by claim 5.

Tabata et al. disclose an illumination device in which light that has entered from an entrance surface to the interior of the light guide element is scattered by a diffusion area to emerge from an exit surface in a predetermined direction. The diffusion area "can be formed by roughening a portion of that opposite surface or by applying a reflection coating thereto" (Col. 5, lines 43-47). Tabata et al. do not disclose or suggest a reflecting plate arranged on both the rear surface and at least one of the peripheral side surfaces of the light-guide plate, as required by amended claim 5. Accordingly, Tabata et al. cannot disclose that a reflecting plate is arranged on a peripheral side surface of the light-guide plate exclusive of the at least one of the peripheral side-surfaces corresponding to the at least one light source.

The cited art, taken singularly or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the features of claim 5. Accordingly, claim 10, which includes all of the features of claim 5 from which it


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depends, is also not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Okuno in view of Tabata et al.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 5, 7, 8 and 10.

Respectfully submitted,


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February 16, 2006


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